UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/SP/SR.8
21 October 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

FOURTH MEETING

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 October 1994, at 3 p.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Mr. CORELL (Representative of the Secretary-General)

Chairperson: Ms. BUCK (Canada)

CONTENTS

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Credentials of representatives

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

DETERMINATION OF THE DURATION OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE 43, PARAGRAPH 10, OF THE CONVENTION

OTHER MATTERS

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of this record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of the Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

1. Mr. FERNANDEZ ESTIGARRIBIA (Paraguay) nominated Ms. Buck (Canada) for the office of Chairperson.

2. Ms. Buck (Canada) was elected Chairperson by acclamation.

3. Ms. Buck (Canada) took the Chair.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The agenda was adopted.

Credentials of representatives

5. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to rules 2 and 3 of the rules of procedure of the Meetings of the State Parties (CRC/CP/5) and said that the Secretary-General had yet to receive proper credentials from some of the States Parties represented at the Meeting. She suggested that, in accordance with rule 3, the representatives of those States Parties should be provisionally authorized to participate in the Meeting, and at the same time urged to expedite the submission of their credentials to the Secretary-General.

6. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

7. The CHAIRPERSON said that she had been informed that Mrs. Limjuco (Philippines) had been nominated by the Asian Group for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

8. Mrs. Limjuco (Philippines) was elected Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

DETERMINATION OF THE DURATION OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE 43, PARAGRAPH 10, OF THE CONVENTION (CRC/SP/11, CRC/SP/12 and CRC/SP/1994/L.1)

9. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General contained in document CRC/SP/11. The programme budget implications of holding one additional annual session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child were set forth in document CRC/SP/12, in particular, in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6. Paragraph 5 indicated that no additional resources would be required for conference servicing under section 25E of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. In paragraph 6, it was noted that additional requirements of US$ 99,900 would arise under section 21 for the biennium 1994-1995 in respect of travel and per diem for the members of the Committee.

10. Ms. STRÖM (Sweden) introduced draft resolution CRC/SP/1994/L.1 on behalf of the sponsors: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. She pointed out that, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, within an exceptionally short period since its adoption, had become the international human rights instrument with the largest number of ratifications, demonstrating the international community's special commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

11. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had been established under the Convention for the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in its implementation. Under article 44 of the Convention, States Parties undertook to submit to the Committee reports on the measures they had adopted which gave effect to the rights recognized by the Convention and on the progress made in the enjoyment of those rights. The World Conference on Human Rights had recommended that the Committee, with the assistance of the Centre for Human Rights, should be enabled expeditiously and effectively to meet its mandate, especially in view of the unprecedented extent of ratifications and subsequent submission of country reports. The Commission on Human Rights had expressed concern about the increasingly heavy workload of the Committee and the resulting difficulties faced by it.

12. The current Meeting had been convened to consider the Committee's proposal that the number of its annual sessions as from 1995, as well as the number of sessions of the working group established to conduct a preliminary review of State Party reports and to consider questions relating to technical assistance and international cooperation, should be increased to three. By 1994, the Committee had received 47 reports, of which it had considered 26 thus far. In addition, 100 reports were overdue. If the Meeting approved the proposal, it would be submitted to the General Assembly for approval. It would have to be taken up in the Third and Fifth Committees before it could be adopted by the Assembly.

13. The sponsors of the draft resolution were convinced that it was vital to provide an adequate measure of time for the meetings of the Committee in order to ensure its continued effectiveness. The States Parties to the Convention had a special responsibility to ensure that the Committee could continue its work unhampered and remained an effective instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child.

14. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said that the Secretariat must be very careful to ensure that the proposal was considered in the Fifth and Third Committees before a decision was taken at the level of the plenary Assembly.

15. Ms. MURUGESAN (India) said that her delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

16. Draft resolution CRC/SP/1994/L.1 was adopted.

17. Mrs. HORIUCHI (Japan) said that her delegation fully appreciated the difficult situation of the Committee resulting from its increasing workload and growing backlog and had therefore joined in the consensus on the draft resolution. However, it was her delegation's understanding that the increase in the number of annual sessions of the Committee and of the working group was a temporary measure and could be reviewed in future if necessary from the standpoint of whether it constituted an effective use of United Nations budgetary resources.

18. Mr. FENN (United Kingdom) said that the Committee had made a compelling case for the additional work time and his delegation had gladly joined in the consensus on the draft resolution. However, it was made clear in document CRC/SP/12 that if the additional amount of $99,900 could not be identified within the contingency fund, the Committee's recommendation would not be implemented in 1995. His delegation had joined in the consensus on that understanding, although it would rather have found a clear indication of an area from which resources could be redeployed so that the Committee would be able to plan with some certainty for 1995.

19. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus; it could have been a sponsor of the draft resolution if the representative of Sweden had consulted it and other African delegations.

20. Ms. STRÖM (Sweden) said that the draft resolution had been circulated by facsimile late on Friday evening and there had not been time to hold consultations with many delegations.

21. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that some delegations did seem to have been informed about the draft resolution.

22. Mr. MAIGA (Mali) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representative of Benin. When consultations were held, all delegations must be involved. It was not acceptable to wait until the last minute to send messages. If his delegation had been informed of the substance of the draft resolution, it would have become a sponsor.

23. Ms. LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that her delegation had joined in the consensus; it would have liked to be a sponsor but there was no clear indication as to where the required additional funds would be found. Since her delegation had not received the text of the draft resolution until that morning, there had been no time for consultations.

OTHER MATTERS

24. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that because of the increasing number of States Parties to the Convention, opportunities for participation by States Parties in the Committee had become correspondingly limited. At the third Meeting, her delegation had raised the possibility of amending article 43, paragraph 2, of the Convention to provide for an increase in the number of experts on the Committee to 18.

25. Acting in conformity with article 50, paragraph 1, of the Convention, she had delivered a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica to the head of the Treaty Section in March 1993, assuming that the proposed amendment would be communicated to States Parties. However, her delegation had heard nothing more concerning the fate of the proposed amendment and would welcome a response.

26. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said that his delegation would also appreciate a response to the initiative taken by Costa Rica.

27. The CHAIRPERSON said that she had been informed that the Secretariat would contact the representative of Costa Rica to explain the situation.

28. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), supported by Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said that all the States Parties needed to know what the Secretariat had done or planned to do about the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica.

29. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Secretariat would consult the Treaty Section and the information would be circulated in writing to all delegations at a later date. She declared the Meeting of States Parties closed.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.